

# EL PASO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

## Review & Recommendations

Prepared for the City of El Paso

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# Charge & methods

- What the study is
- What the study is not
- How I approached the work
- Why it matters

# What is strategy?

## 1) A valid diagnosis

- of a challenge or opportunity...
- which reduces complexity and...
- provides an explanation **and** identifies a domain of action

## Guiding policies

- To channel actions

## Specific actions

- Which are coherent...
- and consistent & coordinated

## Implications...

- Continuous adjustment of strategies is the norm
- Internal capacity to strategize is essential
- Strategies may be nested within one another
- Defined roles, metrics, and accountability essential



# Findings: Stakeholder views

1. There is no working consensus
2. City & region have no joined up ED strategy
3. City's capacity to make & implement strategy is weak
4. REDCo lacks sufficient legitimacy
5. City is hostile to economic development
6. Shift to council-manager form is incomplete
7. Current incentives mix is inadequate
8. No one is playing a "think tank" role
9. No organization is obvious lead for region

# Findings: Stakeholder views

*Mainly regional actions*

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*Mainly city actions*

# Recommendations

- 1) The City should re-tool and appropriately staff its Economic Development Division as well as implement internal organizational reforms to better align the City's planning, development services, and economic development functions.

# Recommendations

- 2) Community leaders in the corporate, education, non-profit, and military sectors must join with public sector appointed and elected officials to (re)form, appropriately resource and govern an organization charged with ***coordinating the creation*** of a broad-based, transparent, and continually updated regional economic development strategy; ***coordinator of the implementation*** of that strategy, in cooperation with the City and the many specialized development organizations in the region; and either ***implementer or oversight agent*** of the region's business attraction, expansion, retention, and marketing programs.

# City actions: Staffing, organization

## Principles: Orient to core activities

- Planning + ED alignment
- ED as ED+CD+WD
- Strategic planning, foresight role
- City incentives programs
- One-stop-shop business assistance
- Liaison and lead partner to regional effort
- Marketing & communications

## Actions

- Hire deputy director for economic development
- Create tripartite **City Development** Department
  - ▣ Planning, Development Services, Economic Development
- Hire Director of City Development
  - ▣ **City ED Team** becomes director + three deputy directors
  - ▣ ED, planning, permitting aligned
- Replenish ED staff
- Reorganize DCM portfolios
  - ▣ ED, CD, and WD become better aligned



# City actions: Policies, programs

- Relinquish retention activities
- Accelerate one-stop-shop permitting, review
- Undertake systematic code, procedures review
- Adopt strategic, oversight role on Council
- Review incentives for potency, effective use
- Review relationship with County, including funding
- Review City relationship with REDCo

# Regional actions

## Principles

- Avoid proliferation of organizations
- Embrace inclusiveness
- Build as public/private with strong corporate leadership
- Embrace a division of labor among organizations with “light touch” coordination
- Provide constructive forum function
- Lead or oversight of marketing, attraction, expansion, retention
- Lead on state, federal advocacy
- Lead partner to Juárez efforts

## Actions

- Create regional organization with structure, staffing and credibility to serve as lead convener, coordinator
  - ▣ Several options involving REDCo, Chamber, PDN

# Closing messages

- Economic development is a slow and steady game that rewards collaboration and trust, sustained investment, and coherence in programs and policies
- The glass in El Paso is half full, not half empty
- There is work for all parties and stakeholders to do
- ***Act...now!***

COMMENTS/REACTIONS:

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